



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks **RECEIVED**

MAR 16 2005

2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings MT 59105

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY OFFICE

March 14, 2005

TO: Environmental Quality Council  
Director's Office, Dept. of Environmental Quality\*  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office  
Parks Division  
Fisheries Division  
Wildlife Division

Lands Section  
Design & Construction  
Legal Unit  
Regional Supervisors

Mike Volesky, Governor's Office  
Sarah Elliott, Press Agent, Governor's Office\*  
Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
Montana State Library\*  
George Ochenski  
Montana Environmental Information Center  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation  
Commissioner Shane Colton  
Bob Raney  
Sharon Moore, DNRC Area Manager, Southern Land Office  
Other Local Interested People or Groups


\* (sent electronically)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for development to Bridger FAS, and is submitted for your consideration. Improvements will include, improving vehicle access, providing a vault latrine, and constructing a boat launch. Questions and comments will be accepted until April 18, 2005.

If you have questions or need additional copies of the draft EA, please contact Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at 247-2940. All comments may be sent by mail to: Doug Habermann, Regional Park Manager at Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105; or by e-mail at [dhabermann@mt.gov](mailto:dhabermann@mt.gov).

Thank you for your interest.

  
Harvey E. Nyberg  
Regional Supervisor

Enclosures



**Draft  
Environmental Assessment**

**BRIDGER  
FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

**March 2005**



***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***



**Internal  
Review**

**Bridger Fishing Access Site Improvements  
Pre-Draft Environmental Assessment  
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

**PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to enhance the Bridger FAS by improving vehicle access and maneuverability; providing parking for up to six vehicles, constructing a non-motorized boat launch, and providing a sealed vault latrine.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this fishing access site function would be accomplished. Sections 12-8-213, 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection of fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection. The opportunity for public involvement regarding the proposed project is provided under MCA 23-1-110.
3. **Name of project:** Bridger Fishing Access Site Improvements
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**  
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring 2005  
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2005  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 50%
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** That part of Lot 7, located in the SW ¼ of Section 22, Township 6 South, Range 23 East, of the Principle Montana Meridian, in Carbon County, Montana, described as Certificate of Survey No. 1098 on file in the office of the Clerk and Recorder of said County, under Document #213311.
7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>2</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>0</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

**8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

**(a) Permits:** permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Carbon County Sanitarian	Sealed Vault Latrine Permit
Department of Environmental Quality	318 Short-Term Water Quality Permit
Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$7,600

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
None	

**9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:** (NOTE: Include maps, site plans showing location and boundaries here and/or under #6 above.)

Bridger FAS is a small, undeveloped access site near the town of Bridger on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River. There is no boat access to the river and walk-in anglers must push through dense vegetation to access the river. There are no designated parking areas and vehicles must turn around without the benefit of a cul-de-sac or other improvement. The difficulty of accessing the river at this site has resulted in fairly low usage, and there is not another state-owned access site in the vicinity. Completing these site improvements would more completely fulfill the stated mission of FWP to "maintain or increase the existing level of public access for fishing and related incidental recreational activities on state waters". In addition, these improvements would protect resources, enhance safety, and provide clean facilities for visitors to enjoy.

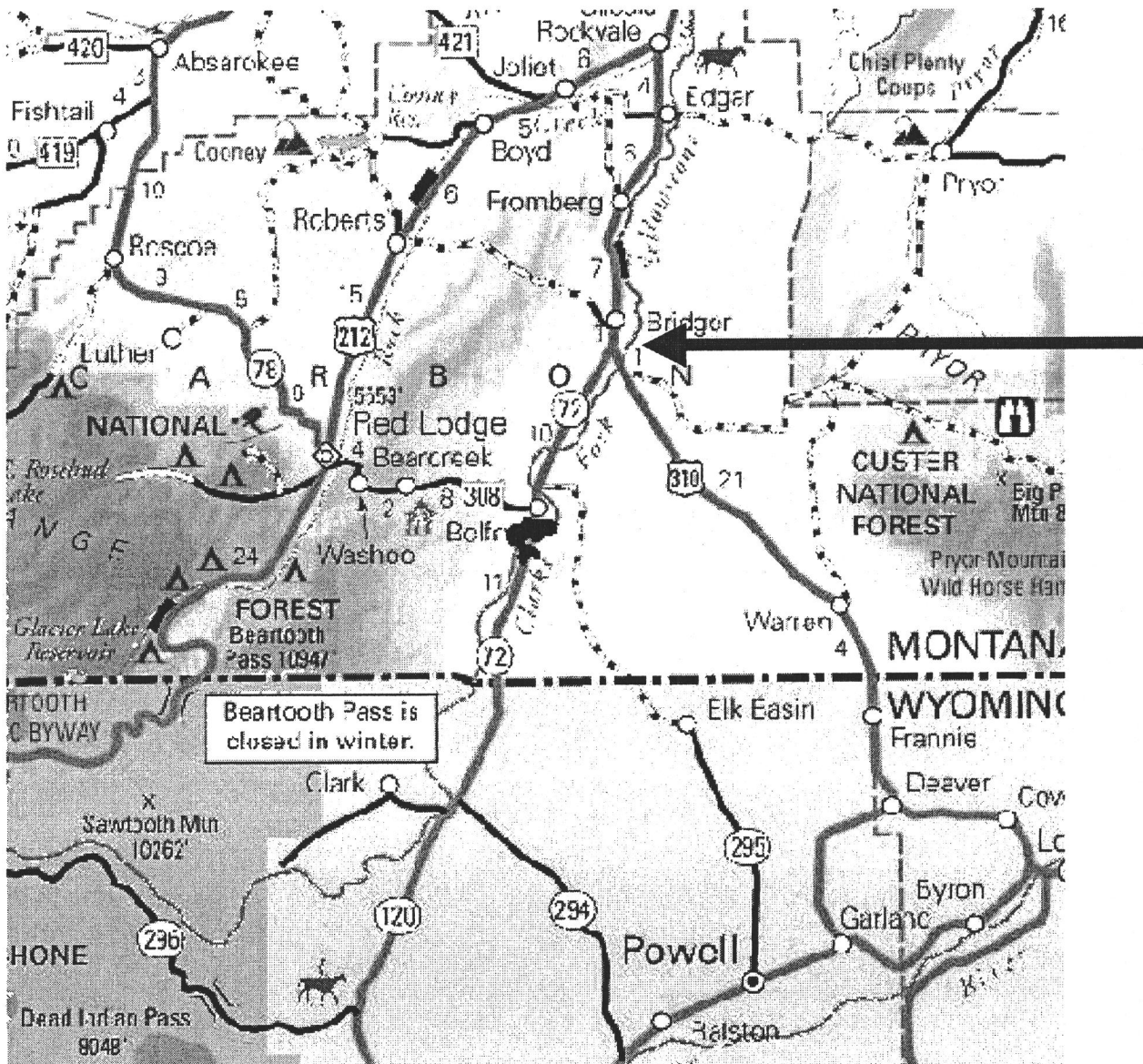
The specific improvements that FWP would like to implement are as follows:

- Construct a single lane gravel loop road through the site which connects back to the existing old highway roadbed.
- Install a culvert underneath the new section of the loop road.
- Develop a graveled parking lot for 4-6 vehicles with trailers.
- Clear brush and construct a 16-foot wide gravel access to the river.
- Install a sealed vault latrine
- Provide additional signage as required.

- Trench and armour the upstream side of the proposed boat ramp to direct site drainage and intercept seepage.

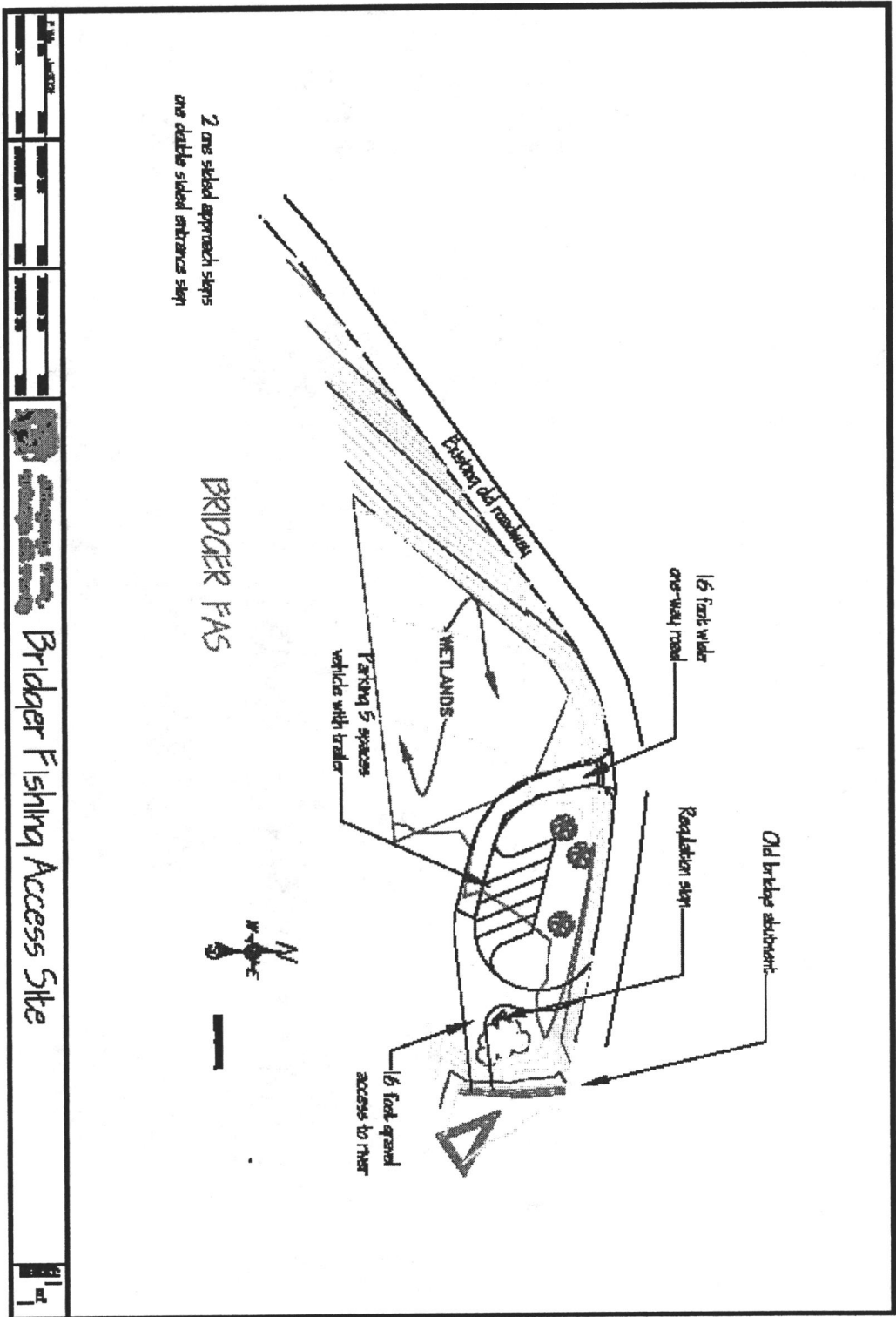
These proposed improvements would allow safe and reasonable access to the river for anglers and recreational boaters, safe parking, and good maneuverability into and out of the access site. The latrine would help to ensure a sanitary site, and the signs would aid in the education of users regarding the rules and regulations of the site.

An additional benefit of these improvements is the opportunity for FWP to engage in community partnerships with the City of Bridger and with Carbon County, both of which have expressed interest in assisting with development and maintenance of the FAS if these improvements are implemented.



**Figure 1.** The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone is shown in blue as it flows out of Wyoming and into Montana. Bridger FAS is denoted by the arrow. The next closest FAS is Bridger Bend,

located approximately 12 miles south of the Bridger FAS and indicated on the map by the fish symbol.



**Figure 2.** Preliminary design for Bridger FAS improvements. Courtesy of Paul Valle.



Bridger FAS looking East. The proposed improvements would utilize this existing roadway but connect the two branches to form an oval. Currently the right-hand road ends in a dead end behind the trees in the foreground, and the left-hand road ends at the bridge abutment. Photo by Linnaea Schroeer-Smith.



Photo, facing east, of the proposed parking area. This photo also shows where access to the river would be located, which would be in the area behind and to the right of the regulation sign. Photo by Linnaea Schroeer-Smith

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

- 1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

### **Alternative A: No Action**

The FAS remains in an undeveloped state. Site receives little use because of difficult access to river and the low aesthetic and usability values of the site. There remains limited opportunity for anglers and other recreationists to access the Clark's Ford of the Yellowstone in this area. The next closest FAS is Bridger Bend, which is 13 miles upstream and does not have a boat access, a latrine, or any other improvement. The closest improved FAS is Duck Creek FAS on the Yellowstone River, which is 45 miles downstream. The river is accessible at Fromberg, 10.4 miles downstream, and at Edgar, 20 miles downstream.

### **Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The proposed development is desired by several local entities, including Carbon County and the City of Bridger. Many people are eager to have public access to the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone in this area, which is reflected in the desire of the County and City to cooperatively develop and maintain this site. The proposed improvements include installing a gravel, non-motorized boat launch to the river; providing a gravel parking for up to 6 vehicles and trailers; construction of a short segment of gravel road that would connect two parts of existing roads, thereby enabling vehicles to make a loop instead of turning around or backing up out of the site; and installing a vault latrine in order to provide a healthy and sanitary environment. These improvements, while minor, would make Bridger FAS a much more attractive access site and recreation destination. Because Bridger FAS is located in a somewhat remote area with low population, the level of use is not expected to reach high levels even with these improvements, but the changes would give local people a way to access the river and probably even draw some recreationists from towns a little further away.

Note: a detailed evaluation of the Proposed Action is included in Part VI. Environmental Review Checklist beginning on page 10.

### **Alternative C.**

An alternative to the proposed project would be to develop the site to a higher level. This would include constructing a larger parking area with room for 10-15 vehicles and trailers, paving the parking area and loop road, constructing a paved boat launch, and installing restroom facilities with flush toilets and sinks. The number of visitors that this site is expected to receive does not currently warrant this level of development.

**2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

The site improvements have been designed to follow Best Management Practices (BMP's). MFWP engineering staff would oversee the completion of the project to ensure that construction meets state specifications, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area, and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation.

The Carbon County Sanitarian must approve installation of the vault latrine.

Noxious weeds would be monitored by MFWP after completion and controlled in accordance with methods outlined in the Region 5 Weed Management Plan and the Carbon County Weed Board.

### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

Bridger FAS provides a unique opportunity for both local residents and visitors from other areas to access the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River. The proposed improvements, while not extensive, will greatly increase the aesthetic value of the area. Site visitation is expected to rise because of the proposed improvements, but it is not expected to rise above moderate levels because of the site's relative remoteness and distance from areas of high population density. Based on the projected numbers of visitors, the level of proposed development is appropriate for moderate use.

The proposed project considers public need for access, resource protection, and is responsive to the desire of the City of Bridger and Carbon County to improve this access site. Both the City and the County have expressed willingness to cooperate with MFWP in patrolling and maintaining the improved site.

This EA did not reveal any significant negative impacts to the physical and human environment. Most minor impacts could be mitigated. No threatened or endangered species have been located in the area, and no unique geological or physical features will be affected. The proposed development will greatly increase visitor enjoyment of the site.

### **PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

The public will be notified by way of two statewide press releases in local newspapers and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page:  
<http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnotices>

2. **Duration of comment period, if any.** 30 day comment period. This level of public involvement is appropriate for this scale of project.

## **PART V. EA PREPARATION**

1. **Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?**  
**If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review found no significant impacts from the proposed action at Bridger FAS. Thus, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriated level of analysis.

2. **Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Doug Habermann  
Region 5 Park Supervisor  
2300 Lake Elmo Dr.  
Billings, MT 59105  
(406)-247-2940

Allan Kuser  
Fishing Acces Site Coordinator  
1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Helena, MT 59620  
(406) 444-2535

Linnaea Schroeer-Smith  
Independent Contractor  
1027 9<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 495-9620

3. **List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Parks Division  
Wildlife Division  
Fisheries Division  
Design & Construction Bureau  
Lands Division

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism  
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

## PART VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

### 3. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

#### A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b.
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?			X			1c.
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

1a. The proposal to add a short section of gravel road, a small parking area, and a gravel boat launch are surface alterations and will not result in soil instability or a change in geologic substructure, nor will maintenance of existing drainage ditches.

1b. The proposed project will cause minor disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss and over-covering of soil. The use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) during construction will minimize the negative consequences of the implementation of this proposal. In addition, the impacts to soil productivity and fertility would be mitigated by concentrating new development in areas that have been previously disturbed, and by making the most use out of existing roads.

1c. With increased visitation there is an increased potential for wildfire caused by human negligence or mischief. Campfires will not be allowed at this site, and posting and enforcing this regulation will mitigate this potential concern.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

2a. Minor amounts of dust will be temporarily created during construction of road, parking area and boat ramp.

2b. Vault latrines can sometimes emit foul odors, but better latrine design and regular maintenance, which the City of Bridger has offered to cooperate with, will help to minimize offensive odors.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <b>WATER</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		Yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- 3a. The proposed project will have a minor to negligible effect on surface water quality due to increased foot traffic and boat launching activities. This increase can be minimized by limiting use to non-motorized boats and by confining boat-launching activities to a particular area (e.g. 16 feet). This mitigating activity will help minimize disturbance of bank and vegetation.
- 3b. The proposed parking area and new section of road would be located on an area with low slope (0-2 percent) and sandy loam soils, so surface runoff will be very little. Cleaning and maintaining existing drainage ditches will reduce ponding of water on-site and slightly increase discharge into the river.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

4a. The vegetation of Bridger FAS is dominated by a low understory of grasses and forbs, including many exotics. There are a few scattered trees and some stands of shrubs at the water's edge. Much of the area affected by this proposal has already been highly altered by road construction and vehicle use, as evidenced by the high concentration of exotics in those areas. As a result, there will be little loss or reduction in the diversity, productivity or abundance of desirable plant species. The construction of the boat ramp will remove some desirable riparian vegetation, but the scope of this project is very small and the negative consequences of such action would be minor.

4e. The proposed project might cause an increase in foot traffic that can lead to the establishment and spread of noxious weeds. A sign at the parking lot educating the public about how to limit the spread of weeds will help alleviate this problem. Noxious weeds would be monitored by FWP after completion and controlled in accordance with methods outlined in the Region 5 Weed management Plan and the Carbon County Weed Board.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE</b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?						
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		Yes	5g.
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

5g. The proposed improvements will likely cause an increase in site visitation, which could result in conditions that cause stress to wildlife populations. However, Bridger FAS is in a fairly remote, sparsely populated part of Montana, so site use is not expected to be heavy. In addition, site development tends to concentrate visitors in the area where improvements have been made, thus minimizing impacts to wildlife residing in the remaining undisturbed area.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

6a. There would be a temporary increase in noise level during construction of the proposed improvements, but it will not be excessive and it is doubtful that any homeowners live close enough to the site to be affected. Likewise, there may be an increase in noise associated with a greater number of visitors to the improved site, but the overall level of use will still be moderate to low, and it is unlikely that any people who live in the area would be adversely affected.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:						

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

8a. The FWP Region 5 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques to limit the possibility of a spill. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination. The latrine vault will be pumped as needed to manage collected human waste.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X positive			9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X positive			9d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e.
f. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

9c. The proposed improvements will make Bridger FAS a more attractive destination for people living in and out of the immediate area. Therefore, it is likely that the town of Bridger would see a small increase in expenditures by visitors on gas, food, and other supplies. Such tourism might result in a small but negligible increase in employment opportunities and personal income.

9d. Please see comment 9c.

9e. There will be a minimal increase of traffic on roads leading to the site. The entrance into the site is visible and should not create a traffic hazard. Appropriate signing will be placed in accordance with Dept. of Transportation standards and regulations.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:						

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

10a. The proposed improvements would affect MFWP Enforcement Division as there would need to be an increased presence of game wardens to enforce fishing regulations and monitor water safety, littering, drug and alcohol use, vandalism, trespassing, and other issues. The Carbon County Sheriff's office would also likely need to monitor the area more frequently and respond to any complaints by concerned neighbors. However, site visitation would be expected to remain low to moderate, and as no overnight camping would be allowed, law-enforcement problems are expected to be minimal.

10e. The proposed project will be funded through Fishing License Revenue.

10f. Yearly maintenance is estimated to be \$300.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION</b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>				<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated *</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
	<b>Unknown *</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor *</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?			X positive			11b.
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X positive			11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

11b. The proposed improvements will make Bridger FAS more aesthetic and give it a well kept, managed appearance. Currently the site looks somewhat neglected and unkempt.

11c. Bridger FAS provides one of only two FAS' on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, and the other one, Bridger Bend, is 13 miles upstream and does not have boat access or any other improvements. Public access to the river is possible at bridges at Fromberg and Edgar, 10.4 and 20 miles downstream respectively. The proposed project will improve the quality of recreational and tourism opportunities and settings.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

12a. A Cultural Resource Inventory is attached.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):**

- \* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- \*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.6041a (ARM).
- \*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- \*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## **Appendix A**

### **Sensitive Species in the Bridger FAS Area**

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database ([nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal](http://nhp.nris.state.mt.us/eoportal)) indicates no known occurrences of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant or animal species in the proposed project site.

#### **Forest Service Sensitive Species**

Forest Service sensitive species are species for which the Regional Forester has determined there is a concern for population viability range-wide or in the region. The following sensitive species is located in the greater Bridger FAS area.

*Cynomys leucurus* (White-tailed Prairie Dog). This sensitive species was last observed in 1977, along the road or near the cemetery about 1 mile south of the town of Bridger on Highway 310. A survey was conducted in 1995 and no evidence of a colony was seen at that time. No further information is available.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. HB495 Qualification Checklist
- B. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- C. Cultural Resource Inventory – State Historic Preservation Office

# Attachment A

## 23-1-110 MCA Project Qualification Checklist

Date: October 6, 2004

Person Reviewing:  
Linnaea Schroeer-Smith  
Independent Contractor  
Schroeer-Smith Scientific Services.

**Project Location:** Bridger FAS is located on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River, near the town of Bridger in Carbon County. The site can be reached by traveling 30 miles south of Laurel, MT on Highway 310. Bridger FAS is in Section 22, Township 6 South, Range 23 East.

**Description of Proposed Work:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to improve Bridger FAS by constructing a gravel parking area for up to 6 vehicles with trailers, constructing a short length of road that would connect two existing pieces of roadway to form a loop, constructing a gravel non-motorized boat ramp, and installing a sealed vault latrine. Currently this site is unimproved and visitors have no designated parking area, vehicle maneuverability is poor, and access to the river is restricted to walk-in only, which is impeded by heavy brush.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ☒ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

☒ A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?

Comments: A short (30 ft) section of road is proposed over land that has been previously disturbed but has now been largely revegetated.

☒ B. New building construction?

Comments: A single sealed vault latrine is proposed.

☒ C. Any excavation of 20 cubic yards or greater?

Comments: The construction of the road segment and parking area will require cut and fill of more than 20 cubic yards.

☒ D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 20% or more?

Comments: The parking area would be located over land that has been previously disturbed, but that has been mostly revegetated, including many exotics.

☐ E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station:

Comments: The construction of a non-motorized boat ramp does not exceed this limit.

- [ ]F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?  
Comments: None
- [ ]G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?  
Comments: None
- [ ]H. Any new above ground utility lines?  
Comments: None
- [ ]I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?  
Comments: No campsites are planned.
- [ ]J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects:  
Comments: No, recreationists already use this site.

09/03 sed

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**TOURISM REPORT**  
**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator  
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce  
PO Box 200533  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

**Project Name:** Bridger FAS Improvements

**Project Description:** Bridger FAS is a small, little-used site on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone just south of the town of Bridger in Region 5. Currently there is no boat access to the river and foot access is impeded by heavy brush. There are no designated parking spaces and vehicle maneuverability is limited. Montana FWP proposes to make Bridger a more usable site by: constructing a gravel non-motorized boat launch; constructing a graveled parking area for up to 6 vehicles and trailers; constructing a short (30-40 ft) section of road that would link two existing roadbeds together, thus forming a loop for vehicles to turn around; and installing a vault latrine. These amenities would help make Bridger FAS a much more attractive destination for recreationists in and out of the area. The next closest FAS is Bridger Bend, which is 13 miles away and does not have boat access.





2005012706

# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

RECEIVED  
FEB 14 2005

Josef  
FWP

Josef Warhank  
Compliance Officer  
State Historical Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 201202  
1410 8th Avenue  
Helena, Montana 59620-1202

CONCUR  
MONTANA SHPO

DATE 14 Feb 05 SIGNED

*Josef Warhank*

RE:

February 10, 2005

Dear Mr. Warhank:

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is proposing improvements at the Bridger Fishing Access Site on the Clark Fork Yellowstone River in Carbon County. The property is located at approximately T6S, R23E S22 as indicated on attached USGS 7.5' quadrangle Bridger. Please refer to the report submitted on January 25, 2005, prepared by Aaberg Cultural Resource Consulting Service entitled *Bridger Fishing Access Site, Class III Cultural Resource survey results in Carbon County, Montana*. The report indicates recordation of two historic bridge abutments 24CB1896. Pursuant to regulations found at 36 CFR 800 we request SHPO review of the aforementioned inventory and the eligibility determinations stated below.

FWP believes that the APE, as defined in the previously submitted report, adequately considers all reasonable potential effects to Historic Properties from this proposed undertaking. We also believe that the report prepared by Steven Aaberg for FWP is adequate and we agree with his methods. We agree with the consultant's recommendation that 24CB1896 is not eligible and that, due to the low likelihood of adverse impacts to cultural resources, the project should be allowed to proceed as proposed.

We request your concurrence on the adequacy of the enclosed report and the ineligibility of 24CB1896. Please feel free to contact Bardell Mangum at (406) 841-4012 or by e-mail at [bmangum@mt.gov](mailto:bmangum@mt.gov) if you have any questions or concerns regarding the proposed project.

Sincerely,

*Bardell Mangum*

Bardell Mangum, ASLA  
Assistant Cultural Resources Coordinator  
Design & Construction Bureau

cc: File 123A.1

file: FWP/2005





# TOWN OF BRIDGER

P.O. Box 368

Bridger, MT 59014

(406) 662-3677

201 South B

February 8, 2005

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Doug Habermann  
2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings, MT 59105

Dear Doug,

The Bridger Town Council agrees to cooperatively maintain the Bridger Fishing Access Site with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The Bridger Fire Department will burn the brush piles and old vegetation on this site. The Town agrees to regularly monitor the site and remove the litter.

The Bridger Town Council supports the Bridger Fishing Access site to the Clark's Fork River and is happy to help ensure that people are not denied use of Montana's natural resources.

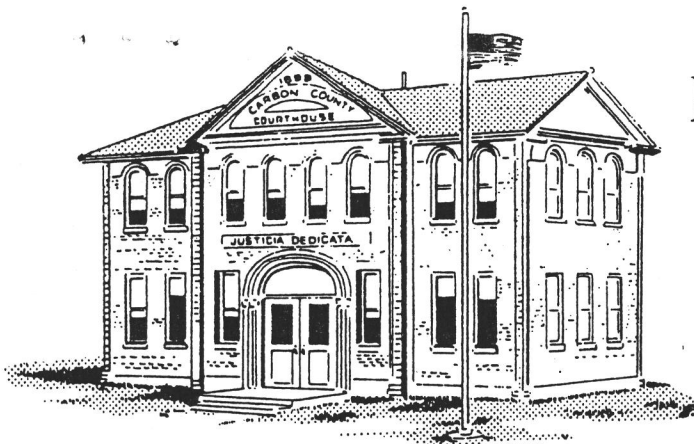
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Kroll".

Bill Kroll  
Mayor





# BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

COUNTY OF CARBON • STATE OF MONTANA

Post Office Box 887  
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Phone: (406) 446-1595  
Fax: (406) 446-2640

---

Doug Habermann  
2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings MT 59105

December 21, 2004

Doug:

I am writing this letter in support of the Bridger Fishing Access site located east of Bridger, Montana. Public access to our lakes, rivers and streams is vitally important. Sites such as this continue to ensure that people are not denied use of Montana's natural resources. I would encourage everyone to lend what ever support they can to worthwhile projects such as this.

Respectfully,

Albert H. Brown  
Carbon County Commissioner

